

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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R 140735Z OCT 75

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5429

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASYU PARIS

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USLO PEKING

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

DIA WASHDC

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 VIENTIANE 5927

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, LA

SUBJECT: VIENTIANE OBSERVES NEW LAO INDEPENDENCE DAY

SUMMARY: THE PGNU CELEBRATED THE THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY

OF THE OCTOBER 12, 1945 "DECLARATION OF LAO INDEPENDENCE" WITH GREAT CEREMONY IN VIENTIANE AND GREATER CEREMONY, WE UNDERSTAND, IN SAM NEUA. SOME 100,000 PEOPLE WERE ASSEMBLED IN THE THAT LUANG AREA FOR A PARADE WHICH HIGHLIGHTED THE CELEBRATION. THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS, INCLUDING THE U.S. CHARGE D'AFFAIRES AND THE THAI AMBASSADOR ATTENDED THE PARADE, A PHOTOGRAPHIC EXHIBITION AND A RECEPTION. THE NEW FLAG, WHICH IS REALLY THE OLD LAO ISSARA FLAG, WAS MUCH IN EVIDENCE AND THE OLD ELEPHANT FLAG PRACTICALLY DISAPPEARED FROM SIGHT. THE KEYNOTE SPEAKER IN VIENTIANE DENOUNCED THE UNITED STATES

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AND ONE OF THE SLOGANS FOR THE DAY WAS "USA GO HOME,"

SOMETHING OF AN ESCALATION IN THE VIEW OF SOME OBSERVERS. HE HAD HARD WORDS FOR THAILAND TOO, ACCUSING THE THAI OF HELPING LAO REACTIONARIES AND U.S. IMPERIALISTS TO OPPOSE THE LAO PEOPLE. A PHOTOGRAPHIC EXHIBIT ALSO TARGETTED THE UNITED STATES. CHINESE AND RUSSIANS WERE MUCH IN EVIDENCE. ALTHOUGH CONSTITUTIONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS REMAINED TO BE WORKED OUT THE FESTIBILITIES PUT A SEAL ON THE COMMUNIST VICTORY IN LAOS. END SUMMARY.

1. THE THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE "DECLARATION OF LAO INDEPENDENCE," OCTOBER 12, 1945, WAS CELEBRATED RATHER LAVISHLY IN VIENTIANE OCTOBER 11, 12 AND 13, 1975. WE UNDERSTAND THAT AN EVEN MORE GRANDIOSE CELEBRATION WAS CONDUCTED SIMULTANEOUSLY IN SAM NEUA. THE VIENTIANE CEREMEONIES WERE UNDER THE NOMINAL DIRECTION OF MEUNE SOMVICHITH, PRESIDENT OF THE VIENTIANE PROVINCIAL REVOLUTIONARY COMMITTEE. THE SENIOR NATIONAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL PRESENT IN TOWN WAS ACTING INFORMATION MINISTER MA KHAYKHAMPHITOUNE, AKA THAO MA, WHO IS ALSO ACTING DEPUTY PREMIER IN THE ABSENCE OF PHOUNE SIPRASEUTH. EX-VIENTIANE SIDE DEPUTY PREMIER AND EDUCATION MINISTER LEUAM INSISIENGMAI MORE OR LESS CO-PRESIDED. TIAO SOMSANITH OF THE KING'S COUNCIL WAS ON HAND. POPULAR PARTICIPATION WAS HIGHLY ORGANIZED AND WE ESTIMATE THAT A TOTAL OF SOME 100,000 PEOPLE WAS ASSEMBLED IN THE THAI LUANG AREA AS MARCHERS AND SPECTATORS DURING THE PARADE ON SUNDAY MORNING OCTOBER 12. SOME OF THEM HAD STARTED WALKING TO THE SCENE AS EARLY AS 0200 DESPITE HEAVY RAINS DURING THE NIGHT.

2. THE PROGRAM IN VIENTIANE DEVELOPED AS FOLLOWS:

A. SATURDAY, OCTOBER 11, AT THAT LUANG ESPLANADE:

(1) 1600: OPENING OF GRANDSTAND AND EXHIBIT OF PHOTOGRAPHS RELATING TO "LAO POPULATION'S STRUGGLE DURING PAST 30 YEARS."

(2) 1900: RECEPTION AT PHONEKHENG CAMP (MINISTRY OF DEFENSE BUILDING).

B. SUNDAY, OCTOBER 12, AT THAT LUANG ESPLANADE:
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(1) 0800: PARADE (GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT 0600, GUESTS ON HAND AT 0630).

(2) 1500: SPORTS MATCHES (INCLUDING SCHEDULED PARTICIPATION BY SOME SENIOR INDIVIDUALS LIKE SINGKAPO).

(3) 1900: PERFORMANCE BY PATRIOTIC FORCES ARTISTIC GROUP.

C. MONDAY, OCTOBER 13, AT THAT LUANG ESPLANADE:

(2) 0700 - 1700: SPORTS MATCHES

(2) 1900: PERFORMANCE BY SOVIET ARTISTIC GROUP.

3. MEMBERS OF DIHAOMATIC CORPS WERE INVITED TO EVENTS

A. (1), A. (2), B. (1) AND B(3). I RECEIVED INVITATIONS TO FIRST THREE AND ATTENDED ALL OF THEM. MY INVITATIONS WERE DELIVERED AT 0730 SATURDAY MORNING AS WERE, I GATHER, THOSE FOR THAI AMBASSADOR. OTHER NON-COMMUNIST EMBASSIES GOT THEIRS TWO DAYS EARLIER. BRITISH, AUSTRALIAN, FRENCH AND FILIPINO DEFENSE ATTACHES WERE INVITED. UNITED STATES AND THAI ATTACHES WERE NOT. THERE WAS MUCH BUZZING ABOUT DETAILS OF INVITATIONS AMONG LOCAL DIPLOMATIC COMMUNITY AND VISITING PRESS WHICH I HAVE TRIED TO DISCOURAGE BECAUSE I THINK IT IS MEANINGLESS. RECENT PAST HISTORY HAS PLACED UNITED STATES AND THAILAND IN SPECIAL CATEGORY HERE. NO MEMBER OF FRENCH MILITARY MISSION ATTENDED ANY CEREMONIES AND THIS SEEMS QUITE NATURAL TOO. THERE WERE OF COURSE PLENTY OF RUSSIANS AND CHINESE IN EVIDENCE. ONE FRIENDLY ATTACHE COUNTED 60 RUSSIANS PRESENT AT THE PHONEKHENG RECEPTION AND THERE MAY HAVE BEEN MORE. I SAW, I WOULD GUESS, A COUPLE OF DOZEN UNIFORMED CHINESE FROM "OUTSIDE" WHO REPORTEDLY ARRIVED ON A SPECIAL FLIGHT SATURDAY. OTHER REPORTS INDICATE THERE WERE MORE CHINESE THAN RUSSIANS AT THE RECEPTION.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 VIENTIANE 5927

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

4. RUMORS WERE CURRENT THAT IENG SARY AND OTHER CAMBODIAN "COMRADS" HAD TOUCHED DOWN BRIEFLY AT VIENTIANE'S WATTAY AIRPORT EN ROUTE TO SAM NEUA FOR THE MAIN EVENT.

5. VIENTIANE CITY AND THE THAT LUANG AREA WERE FESTOONED WITH HUNDRED OF "PATHET LAO" FLAGS (HORIZONTAL RED STRIPES TOP AND BOTTOM, EACH ONE QUARTER HEIGHT OF FLAG; HORIZONTAL BLUE STRIPE BETWEEN RED STRIPES, ONE HALF HEIGHT OF FLAG; SOLID WHITE CIRCLE IN CENTER OF BLUE STRIPE). WHAT IS POPULARLY CALLED THE PATHET LAO FLAG IS IN FACT THE LAO ISSARA FLAG FROM THE LATE 1940'S. THERE WERE ONLY TWO OLD LAO FLAGS (WHITE THREE-HEADED ELEPHANT ON RED GROUND) AT THAT LUANG. ON SATURDAY THERE WAS ONLY ONE TO BE SEEN IN VIENTIANE CITY: SOUVANNA PHOUMA WAS ABSENT IN LUANG PRABANG, BUT HIS HOUSE, LIKE BARBARA FRIETCHIE'S IN FREDERICK TOWN, FLEW THE OLD FLAG. AS OF OCTOBER 14 IT WAS FLYING BOTH FLAGS.
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6. THE 0800 PARADE ON SUNDAY WAS THE PRINCIPAL EVENT IN VIENTIANE. TWO COMPANIES OF INFANTRY, ONE WITH AUTOMATIC WEAPONS AND ONE WITH RIFLES AND BAYONETS, OPENED THE MARCH FOLLOWED BY A COMPANY OF WOMEN ARTILLERISTS WITH TWO JEEP-TOWED ROCKET LAUNCHERS AND FOUR TRUCK-MOUNTED RECOILLESS RIFLES. A COUPLE OF OTHER MILITARY UNITS -- INCLUDING ONE COMPANY OF WOMEN IN LAO TRADITIONAL DRESS CARRYING CARBINES AND THE PERSONNEL OF THE LAO ELECTRIC COMPANY AND ROYAL AIR LAO -- CAME ALONG LATER, BUT CIVILIAN PARTICIPATION FAR OUTNUMBERED MILITARY. I ESTIMATE THAT SOME 80 COMPANIES OF CIVILIANS AND MILITARY MARCHED PAST PLUS LAO AND CHINESE STUDENTS, MUSICIANS, DANCERS AND PEOPLE ON FLOATS. ONE FLOAT FEATURED SOMEBODY LABELED "CIA" BEING CHASTISED WITH RIFLE, HAMMER AND MACHETE. MEN AND WOMEN PARTICIPATED IN ABOUT EQUAL NUMBERS.

7. A SPEECH BY MEUNE SOMVICHITH PRECEDED THE PARADE. ONCE BEFORE AND ONCE DURING THE SPEECH A SORT OF CHEERING SECTION IN A GRANDSTAND OPPOSITE THE MAIN REVIEWING STAND HELD UP CARDS SPELLING OUT IN ENGLISH: "USA GO HOME." SOME OBSERVERS REGARD THIS AS AN ESCALATION

OF LOGANS. MEUNE'S SPEECH, WITH RECAPITULATED A REVISIONIST VIEW OF THE HISTORY OF THE PAST THIRTY YEARS WITHOUT, INCIDENTALLY, ONCE MENTIONING SOUVANNA PHOUMA, INCLUDED A COUPLE OF DISOBLIGING REMARKS ABOUT THE UNITED STATES, NOTABLY:

A. "WE SHOULD NOT FOREGET THAT THE AMERICAN IMPERIALISTS AND THE LACKEYS ARE OUR ENEMIES WITH WHOM WE CANNOT LIVE IN THIS WORLD. THAT IS WHY WE MUST CONCENTRATE OUR IMPLACABLE HATRED ON THE AMERICAN IMPERIALISTS AND THEIR LACKEYS. LET US ACT SO THAT OUR HATRED WILL BE CONCRETIZED TO SWEEP AWAY EVERY ROTTENNESS, EVERY INJUSTICE LEFT BY THEM."

ALSO THE FOLLOWING ITEMS WHICH STRIKES ME AS A SCRAMBLED METAPHOR (UNDERLINE IS MINE):

B. "DESPITE ITS RECENT DEFEAT, AMERICAN IMPERIALISM CONTINUES NO LESS TO IMPEDE THE MARCH OF OUR PEOPLE. IT IS GOING AHEAD
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WITH THE REGROUPING OF REACTIONARY ELEMENTS CREATING TROUBLE AMONG THE PEOPLE.

RECENTLY (BEGIN UNDERLINE) THE CIA SHOWED ITS TRUE FACE IN USING BONG SOUVANNAVONG AS A SCREEN (END UNDERLINE.)

8. MEUNE ALSO HAD SOME HARD WORDS FOR THAILAND AS FOLLOWS:

A. "UP TO NOW THE THAI GOVERNMENT HAS CHANGED NOTHING IN ITS POLICY. IT CONTINUES TO SUPPORT AND HELP THE LAO REACTIONARIES BY ALL MEANS CREATING AND PROVOKING TROUBLES AND INSECURITY ON THE FRONTIER BY APPLYING ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL PRESSURES."

B. "ALL THESE ACTIONS COULD NOT BE CLEARER; THEY ARE THE ACTS OF COMPLICITY WITH AMERICAN IMPERIALISM TO OPPOSE AGAIN THE LAO PEOPLE'S POWER."

C. "WE WANT TO HAVE RELATIONS OF FRATERNITY AND OF GOOD NEIGHBORS WITH THAILAND BASED ON THE PRINCIPLE OF EQUALITY OF RECIPROCAL INTERESTS AND OF MUTUAL RESPECT FOR INDEPENDENCE AND SOVEREIGNTY NOT INTERFERING IN EACH OTHER'S AFFAIRS."

D. "BUT WE WILL NOT PERMIT ANYONE TO VIOLATE OUR SOVEREIGNTY AND OUR INTERESTS WITH IMPUNITY."

9. THE SATURDAY PHOTO EXHIBIT WAS A PRETTY RUN-OF-THE-MILL ASSEMBLY OF POOR QUALITY PHOTOGRAPHS ON THE HISTORY OF THE PATHET LAO AND NOT NEARLY SO ANTI-AMERICAN AS I HAD

EXPECTED, ALTHOUGH NATURALLY THE U.S. WAS FEATURED AS ENEMY NUMBER ONE. THERE WERE PHOTOGRAPHS OF HUGH TOVAR AND OF "POP" BUELL STIGMATIZED AS "CIA" AND THERE WERE UN-FLATTERING PHOTOGRAPHS OF PRESIDENTS KENNEDY AND NIXON; AT LEAST ONE OF A CHILD WHO HAD LOST A LEG; AND SEVERAL OF BOMB DAMAGE TO PAGODAS.

10. COMMENT: CERTAIN CONSTITUTIONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS REMAIN TO BE SORTED OUT AND MAY NOT ALL BE CLEARED UP UNTIL ELECTIONS ARE HELD. HOWEVER, THE OCTOBER 12 FESTIVITIES PUT THE SEAL ON THE COMMUNIST VICTORY IN LAOS.
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